



**US Army Corps
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Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

Release No.: 0898

For Release: 18 Dec 2008

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps temporarily closes sections of Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail

Clewiston, FL – Eastern sections of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail are temporarily closed until further notice while construction continues on the Herbert Hoover Dike.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has closed the trail in two locations: a 9-mile stretch from Port Mayaca to Canal Point, and a 9.8-mile stretch from Pahokee to Belle Glade, while three construction crews install cutoff wall within the dike to prevent erosion.

“Safeguarding the public is our highest priority – that’s the number one reason we’re rehabilitating the dike,” said Ingrid Bon, project manager for the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD). “While this construction is ongoing, we also want to ensure the safest conditions possible at these work sites – not only for the public, but for the workers there, too.”

Three Corps contractors began preparations for installing the cut-off wall in October along the southeast shore of Lake Okeechobee, between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade. The Corps considers this 22-mile stretch, called Reach 1, the most vulnerable section of the 143-mile dike.

Bon says the Corps is leaving the central portion of the trail in Reach 1 open, from Pahokee to Canal Point. Since there will not be work in that section of the dike for a while yet, foot traffic and bicyclists can use the trail there. There are no dike access points north of Canal Point to Sand Cut. Recreationists who want to traverse the whole trail distance with minimal obstruction can take Highway 715, which parallels the dike/trail for 22 miles from Port Mayaca to Belle Glade.

Thousands of visitors each year enjoy the trail for walking, hiking, rollerblading, bicycle and horseback riding. More than half of the 110-mile trail is paved, and the remainder consists of a two-track



gravel roadway on top of the Herbert Hoover Dike. Corps contractors installing the cutoff wall will return the dike, including sections of the trail that are not paved, to its pre-construction condition.

For more information, contact the South Florida Operations Office at 863-983-8101, or go to www.saj.usace.army.mil. For dike information, go to 'Hot Topics' in the right column, click Herbert Hoover Dike; for recreation, go to the top 'How do I', click 'Find a Recreation Area', and in the right column, click Trails.